

VIII.

History of a Case of obstinate Cough, returning at intervals, removed by the use of the Cuprum Ammoniacum. By Mr Benjamin Bell, Surgeon at Wigton in Cumberland.

A. D. aged 21 years, applied to me in December 1784, for a violent cough. She is above middle stature, and apparently robust. Her menses had flowed at regular periods, but had been scanty for two years past, which was the beginning of her indisposition. She says she was seized suddenly, after getting wet at the time of menstruation, with a most severe fit of coughing in the evening, which continued till noon the day following, without any remission, so as to alarm both her master and mistress exceedingly. They immediately called in the family apothecary; and he administered different medicines, without any apparent advantage whatever.

The paroxysm continued violent, like one in the whooping-cough, for near fourteen hours; after which she found herself exceedingly debilitated, with some remains of cough and dyspnœa at times. But this did not hinder her from doing her duty as a servant, for some months after.

She was then seized with another fit of coughing, as severe as before, and of the same duration. As the apothecary employed before, did not give her any relief, they employed another with as little success; for the medicines administered neither shortened the paroxysm, nor prevented its return.

From repeated attacks of this kind, she was obliged to leave her service, and to go home to her father's, when she applied to me.

This was about two years from her first attack. She then menstruated pretty regularly; but still in less quantity than when in health. Her appetite was only middling. She rested tolerably in the nights, when free of dyspnœa. She had thirst. Her tongue was clean, and belly regular; but she was not quite so corpulent as before the attack. Her pulse was quick; and she was sensible of her being more feeble than when in perfect health.

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I looked upon her complaints to proceed from a great degree of mobility of the nervous system, which led me to suppose, the remedies best suited to remove them, were those that were most effectual in removing relaxation of the nervous system, such as tonics in general. I had, lately before, had great opportunities in seeing the good effects of copper as a general tonic, which led me to the use of cuprum ammoniacum. This I administered at first in small doses, increasing the dose as carefully as I could, to produce no sickness, or as little as possible. She persevered in this manner for a few weeks with great advantage; all her former complaints immediately went off; and she has since enjoyed as good health as before her attack.

In 1786, I was called to her in labour, when she was delivered of a fine healthy boy. She had been then about twelve months married, and never had any return of her former complaints.

